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# The Limits of Family Philosophy: the Question of the Meaning of Life

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## Abstract

Family philosophy has not only been proposed as a corrective to modern individualism, but also as a response to contemporary nihilism. It maintains that the modern world, grounded in the notion of the individual subject, is confronted with a condition of nihilism, and that only by “returning home,” i.e. cultivating intimate familial affection, and sustaining the generative continuity of life, can we recover a meaningful and humane world. This paper argues, first, that the supposed nihilistic condition of modernity, as construed by family philosophy, is in fact a pseudo-problem. Second, key notions such as returning home, intimate familial affection, and the generative continuity of life, do not provide viable solutions to the genuine challenges of modern society. Finally, the idea of returning to a family-based way of living ultimately amounts to an attempt to address the utilitarian, social, moral, political, and religious dilemmas faced by modern individuals through the construction of a kinship-based community grounded in affective ties and shared norms. This attempt, however, is both illusory and untenable, insofar as it exceeds the proper scope and limits of family philosophy.

## Keywords

family philosophy – nihilism – modernity

The processes of industrialization, urbanization, and marketization associated with modernization have disrupted the social and moral order constructed on the basis of traditional values. Meanwhile, issues arising alongside modernization—such as rising divorce rates, the atomization of family life, and challenges related to elder care—have also weakened our sense of social belonging.

Over the past two decades, scholars such as Yang Xiaosi 杨效斯, Zhang Xianglong 張祥龍 (1949–2022), and Sun Xiangchen 孫向晨 have proposed the concept of family philosophy as a way to counter the impacts of modernization and to address the various problems it brings, sparking widespread scholarly discussion. Many others, including Hong Won-Sik 洪元植, Lin Haishun 林海順, Xiang Shiling 向世陵, Pan Xiaohui 潘小慧, Luo Anxian 羅安憲, Zhu Gang 朱剛, Huang Qixiang 黃啟祥, Sun Zailin 孫再林, Cheng Lesong 程樂松, Li Kelin 李科林, Wang Pei 汪沛, Ren Jiantao 任劍濤, Tan Ankui 譚安奎, Li Fenghua 李風華, Yu Bing 喻冰, Chen Jianhong 陳建洪, and Li Yong 李勇, have further explored family philosophy through their own research.

A central ethical claim attributed to family philosophy is that the concept of family can rescue us from nihilism. This is often taken to be its most important justificatory argument and thereby forms the core focus of this paper. Through the notion of returning home (*gui jia* 歸家), it is argued, we can overcome nihilism. Nihilism is indeed a significant philosophical problem, and responding to it constitutes a profound and difficult challenge.

This paper argues that, at a theoretical level, returning home, as a concept, may be understood as one possible way to respond to nihilism. However, it is certainly not the only way, nor is it even among the most compelling available options. In terms of social reality, moreover, this paper contends that nihilism is not the defining problem confronting our age, but rather a pseudo-problem, while the idea of returning home represents a correspondingly false redemption in response to real-world concerns.

In essence, returning home seeks to address the utilitarian, social, moral, political, and religious challenges faced by modern individuals through the construction of a kinship-based community grounded in blood ties and shared affective norms. Such an endeavour, however, is ultimately illusory and untenable, insofar as it exceeds the proper scope of family philosophy.

## 1 Nihilism and Returning Home as an Affirmative Response

While many scholars have either defended or criticized family philosophy, relatively few have approached it through the lens of nihilism. As one of its

leading proponents, Sun Xiangchen explicitly argues that resisting nihilism is among the most important reasons for endorsing family philosophy. He offers a detailed account of how returning home can serve to overcome nihilism.

According to Sun Xiangchen, whether in the context of the Confucian tradition, the broader framework of Chinese cultural traditions, or even in a global context, the idea of family possesses a fundamental, universal, and structural significance for human existence.<sup>1</sup> It is indispensable to human life and occupies a distinctive structural position in society.

Sun further proposes that family philosophy operates on three levels: ontology, axiology, and the lifeworld. At the ontological level, the family, as a basic structure and minimal unit of human society, constitutes a fact in an existential sense. At the axiological level, the family functions as an ideal model that provides a point of reference for our lived reality. At the level of the lifeworld, the family discloses what he calls the “warm” dimension of the world.

Within this framework, *qinqin* 親親 (familial affection) is taken as the foundation of the family, while *shengsheng* 生生—the generative continuity of life, embodied in the growth of the next generation—serves to alleviate our pervasive anxiety about death. In this sense, it represents a “philosophy of hope” grounded in the continuity of life.<sup>2</sup>

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the family, as a universal feature of human life, does not derive its value and significance from any specific cultural tradition, but rather possesses a universal significance. In this sense, returning home may be understood within a naturalistic framework and need not rely on any culturally presupposed notion of the supernatural. Of course, discussions of the family may also unfold within a supernatural framework, as in traditions such as Christianity or Judaism.

If the family at the center of family philosophy is understood within a naturalistic framework, then a further question arises: can family philosophy be regarded as offering a subjectivist or objectivist account of the meaning of life?

Within a naturalistic context, if returning home is taken as a subjectivist response to the meaning of life, then identification with and return to the family would be closely tied to individual desires, emotions, and attitudes. Scholars such as Sun Xiangchen emphasize that the family is an ontological reality possessing a form of existential priority—that is, most of us come into existence within the family. But can such priority confer meaning upon life?

1 Sun Xiangchen 孫向晨, “He yi gui jia: xiandai xing de jiushu” 何以歸家：現代性的救贖, *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊, no. 3 (2024): 24.

2 Sun Xiangchen 孫向晨, “Qinqin: zai tongyi yu tazhe zhijian” 親親：在同一與他者之間, *Fudan xuebao* 復旦學報, no. 2 (2022): 31.

Firstly, this kind of existential priority does not necessarily entail that we hold positive desires, emotions, or attitudes toward the family. People's experiences of family life vary widely. Some grow up in happy families and enjoy positive childhood experiences; others do not. Likewise, individuals differ significantly in their attitudes toward forming their own families. Some aspire to marriage, childbearing, and family life, while others fear marriage or choose not to have children.

For example, according to data from China's National Bureau of Statistics, there were 7.643 million marriages and 2.8393 million divorces in mainland China in 2021. In 2022, China's population recorded a negative growth of 850,000 for the first time.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, although most people are indeed raised within families, it does not follow that everyone holds a positive attitude toward marriage and reproduction.

The point of this argument is not to claim that the existence of even a single individual with negative attitudes toward marriage, reproduction, or family would undermine the universal applicability of returning home as advocated by family philosophy. Rather, a key difference between modern and premodern societies lies in the plurality and diversity of life choices. Choosing not to marry or have children has become a relatively common phenomenon in modern societies. If a substantial number of individuals actively make such choices, this at least suggests that they may hold more positive attitudes toward alternative ways of life—or that such alternatives provide them with a greater sense of fulfilment than returning to the family.

A natural response from proponents of family philosophy is that the fact that many people are unwilling to return to the family does not entail that they ought not to do so, nor does it imply that the family is not the source of life's meaning. Such an inference would clearly commit the naturalistic fallacy—deriving an “ought” from an “is.”

However, according to subjectivist theories of life's meaning, if an individual does not hold a positive attitude toward the family, they cannot derive meaning from engagement with it. Similarly, if a person does not have a positive attitude toward marriage, they cannot derive meaning from participating in it. The core of subjectivism lies in the individual's positive orientation toward objects that confer meaning. For instance, many scholars trained in Western philosophy are not interested in Chinese philosophy and therefore cannot derive meaning from engaging with it. This is because subjectivist theories largely take the

3 *Statistical Communiqué on the Development of Civil Affairs (2021)*, Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, <https://www.mca.gov.cn/images3/www2017/file/202208/2021mzsyfztjgb.pdf>.

form of desire-satisfaction accounts of meaning and value, in which value is understood as the fulfilment of certain desires.

In addition, a crucial distinction must be made here regarding whether the strength of a given positive attitude is sufficient to withstand the threat of nihilism. We may hold positive attitudes toward many things, yet none of them may be strong enough to counter nihilism. For example, a person may enjoy fine food or travel, but such interests are insufficient to sustain a meaningful life. Few people can imagine spending their entire lives in the pursuit of cuisine or scenic experiences alone.

Therefore, the key issue is not merely whether we hold a positive attitude toward the family, but whether such an attitude can resist nihilism. As noted above, although we maintain positive attitudes toward many things, we do not typically regard them as helping to resist nihilism or as constituting the meaning of life. I may enjoy good food, but I do not believe that a life devoted to consuming more food is thereby more meaningful than one devoted to consuming less. Similarly, some people enjoy reading philosophical works, yet engaging in philosophical study does not necessarily enable them to counter nihilism.

From the foregoing discussion, we could draw a provisional conclusion: if one's inclination toward the family is understood merely as a positive attitude, then from a subjectivist perspective, this alone is insufficient to establish returning home as a universally valid strategy for overcoming nihilism. Of course, a stronger claim could be advanced, namely, that the inclination toward the family is not merely a contingent, individual-specific positive attitude, but a universal one, akin to our preference for health, since no one desires an unhealthy body. Proponents of family philosophy appear inclined to endorse, or at least presuppose, such a stronger thesis.

Admittedly, this claim may seem capable of justifying returning home as a universal path for resisting nihilism. However, it faces two major objections. First, as previously noted, there is an empirical objection: not everyone holds a positive attitude toward the family. Individuals with adverse childhood experiences may, for whatever reason, prefer to live alone or with pets rather than form a family. Others may place high expectations on family life but find it difficult in practice to find a suitable partner. For such individuals, successfully forming a family is not a viable means of resisting nihilism; indeed, forcing oneself into family life may generate even greater suffering and a deeper sense of meaninglessness.

Secondly, there is a conceptual objection. Even if a positive orientation toward the family were universal, it would need to be regarded as the most important such attitude for countering nihilism. In other words, this stronger

claim presupposes that we must all take the family to be the central and most significant element of human life, such that all aspects of our existence ought to be organized around it.<sup>4</sup>

As stated before, if the family is merely one among many objects toward which we hold positive attitudes, then—like fine food—it cannot serve to counter nihilism. Most of us can readily imagine a life without fine cuisine that is nonetheless meaningful. Similarly, many people can imagine a life without marriage or children that still retains meaning. In this sense, it is difficult to establish that the family constitutes the most important positive attitude for everyone.

It should be clarified that the foregoing argument is directed at refuting a universal claim—namely, that returning home ought to be a universally valid means of resisting nihilism. It does not refute the more limited claim that returning home may serve as a means of resisting nihilism for those who hold a positive attitude toward the family. Clearly, many people willingly devote themselves to family life and find meaning and value only within it. However, if family philosophy attempts to generalize this strongest form of positive attitude toward the family—by claiming that everyone either does or ought to hold such an attitude—then this move is analogous to demanding that everyone adopt the strongest possible commitment to philosophical inquiry, even though the pursuit of philosophy is only one among many ways in which some individuals seek meaning in life.

The argument in this section has focused on returning home as a subjectivist response to nihilism within a naturalistic framework. If returning home is neither a universal positive attitude nor the most important among such attitudes, then it cannot be justified as a universally valid strategy for resisting nihilism. This raises a further question: can returning home instead be understood as an objectivist response to nihilism within a naturalistic framework?

## 2 Nihilism and Returning Home as the Pursuit of the Good

As noted earlier, the pursuits of truth, goodness, and beauty constitute three principal objectivist approaches to the meaning of life. From this perspective, returning home may be interpreted as a pursuit of the good. The question, then, is whether such a pursuit can resist nihilism. I argue that, insofar as it represents a pursuit of the good, returning home can indeed counter nihilism. However, for family philosophy, the inconvenience is that this mode of

4 Li Yong 李勇, “Jia de zhexue: jieshi haishi bianhu” 家的哲學：解釋還是辯護, *Zhexue dongtai* 哲學動態, no. 6 (2022): 36–44.

resistance is not in any way distinctive when compared with other forms of pursuing good.

There are many ways of pursuing the good. As mentioned above, the work of Zhang Guimei 張桂梅—who has provided free educational opportunities for girls in impoverished mountainous regions—is clearly an instance of moral goodness. In our everyday experience, acts of altruism appear to embody the pursuit of some form of goodness. For example, the life of Mother Teresa (1910–1997) was devoted to caring for the poor, the sick, and those abandoned by society.

Beyond subjectively altruistic actions, we also commonly regard the conscientious fulfilment of one's duties—especially in certain socially significant roles—as a form of pursuing the good. Professions such as police officers, doctors, teachers, and soldiers often require a high degree of personal sacrifice, and such sacrifice is typically understood as an expression of moral commitment.

Similarly, the cultivation of harmonious family relationships, the care of family members, and the fulfilment of familial responsibilities may also be understood as a positive pursuit of the good. In this sense, returning home is not merely about seeking warmth or emotional comfort, but also about caring, giving, and contributing. The family is not a naturally given haven, but rather a form of community akin to other social groups. Within this community, some members, such as the elderly and children, require greater care, while others, typically adults, are called upon to contribute more. Those who give more assume greater responsibility and make greater sacrifices.

Understood as a pursuit of the good, returning home can be interpreted as an objectivist path to the meaning of life and, in that sense, may serve to counter nihilism. However, this mode of pursuit does not appear to be superior to other ways of pursuing the good. In traditional societies, most people spent their entire lives within the family, and for them, their family members constituted their most important relationships. In modern societies, however, with increasing industrialization, urbanization, and professionalization, many individuals have moved beyond the confines of the traditional family. Much of their time is spent in schools and workplaces, where they encounter diverse people, pursue varied and meaningful careers, and form new kinds of communities. Many functions once fulfilled by the family have been partially replaced by these social institutions.

For example, a scholar deeply devoted to her work may choose not to marry or have children, believing that her limited lifetime ought to be devoted to research. Similarly, a successful entrepreneur may have a family but devote most of her energy to managing her business.

The discussion in this section has examined the family as an objectivist response to nihilism within a naturalistic framework. In this sense, returning home can indeed provide meaning in life. However, as a form of pursuing the good, it is not necessarily superior to other such pursuits. Thus, if family philosophy is taken to claim superiority over all other ways of pursuing the good, such a claim is untenable both empirically and conceptually. Accordingly, to call upon everyone to find meaning in life through returning home is analogous to calling upon everyone to find that meaning through academic research.

Moreover, family philosophy faces an additional challenge here: alternative pursuits of the good—such as the work of Zhang Guimei—may appear to possess even greater moral value. We neither would nor should demand that someone like Zhang Guimei return home.

### 3 Nihilism as a Pseudo-problem of Our Time

When viewed at the level of an entire era, nihilism is more akin to an intellectuals' lament than a real social condition. Consider global poverty: according to World Bank reports, in 2018, 8.6% of the world's population lived below the poverty line (on less than \$1.90 per day).<sup>5</sup> Even with a conservative estimate of 6 billion people, this amounts to over 500 million individuals struggling for basic subsistence. For these people, "emptiness" is a luxury: they are concerned with securing enough food.

Turning to China, recent census data suggest that around 600 million people earn roughly 1,000 CNY per month.<sup>6</sup> Given current costs of housing, healthcare, and education, it is difficult to imagine what life is like at that income level. Even a routine hospital treatment can cost hundreds of CNY. What happens if such individuals suffer from serious or even chronic illness? With a population of this scale, it is hard to imagine discussing life's meaning, nihilism, or family philosophy with them.

The central issues of our time have not reached the level of abstraction implied by nihilism. Rather, they remain poverty, health, and development. Humanity still faces severe challenges: lack of food, clean water, and basic

5 See the World Bank website, "April 2022 Global Poverty Update," accessed April 08, 2022, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/april-2022-global-poverty-update-world-bank>. The global poverty rate in 2013 was 11%.

6 Fei Tai'an 費太安, "Zhongguo shi xiandaihua: gao zhiliang fazhan yu gongtong fuyu de renkou luoji" 中國式現代化：高質量發展與共同富裕的人口邏輯, *Jingji yanjiu cankao* 經濟研究參考, no. 3 (2023): 24.

medicine for large portions of the population; widespread disease; employment pressures. Even in developed countries, pandemics such as COVID-19 have caused extensive loss of life, and diseases like cancer remain pervasive. In China alone, there were over 4 million new cancer cases in 2022.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, unemployment remains a serious issue; according to the latest statistics, the unemployment rate is currently around 5%.<sup>8</sup> For most people, concerns about health, employment, and family welfare dominate daily life.

These observations do not deny the philosophical importance of nihilism. However, nihilism is not the defining problem of our era. Even among academics with stable incomes, concerns tend to revolve around health, family, and work rather than existential emptiness. What we experience is anxiety, but it is anxiety about concrete realities—not nihilism.

We must distinguish between a fleeting sense of emptiness and nihilism as a comprehensive worldview. The occasional feeling of emptiness is not equivalent to living in a nihilistic age. Thus, if family philosophy justifies itself on the grounds that we live in a nihilistic era, then it rests on a mistaken premise.

#### 4 Returning Home as a False Redemption

Sun Xiangchen argues that returning home, grounded in *qinqin*, has positive significance for modern individuals and may even constitute their shared destiny.<sup>9</sup> At its core, this idea proposes that building a kinship-based community can address the many challenges faced by modern individuals. However, this attempt is bound to fail. The fundamental problems individuals face in modern society are closely tied to employment, income, and distributive justice. If individuals have stable jobs and sufficient income, they can live with dignity and better cope with other challenges. Conversely, if people are preoccupied with rent and medical expenses, dignity becomes unattainable. In this sense, returning home does little to resolve these real social problems.

7 Liu Liqiong 劉麗瓊, Yu Yang 余楊, Guo Siqi 郭思琪, and Chen Ling 陳玲, “Ji yu CiteSpace jin 10 nian guoneiwai aizheng bingren xinli tanxing de yanjiu redian he qianyan fenxi” 基於 CiteSpace 近 10 年國內外癌症病人心理彈性的研究熱點和前沿分析, *Xunzheng huli* 循證護理 9, no. 20 (2023): 3714.

8 Chen Fang 陳芳, “Neisheng dongneng chixu xiufu, nianmo jingji chongci you jintou” 內生動能持續修復, 年末經濟衝刺有勁頭, *Shanghai zhengquan bao* 上海證券報, December 4, 2023, 1.

9 Sun Xiangchen 孫向晨, “He yi ‘gui-jia’: yizhong zhexue de shijiao” 何以“歸-家”——一種哲學的視角, *Zhexue dongtai* 哲學動態, no. 3 (2021): 47.

If we are to propose meaningful solutions, they must be structural: raising incomes, improving healthcare access, ensuring educational equality, and promoting social welfare. These, rather than returning home, are the conditions for a dignified life.

However, if we restrict returning home to concrete practices such as marriage and childbearing, are those who have returned home necessarily happier than those who have not? The essence of the philosophy of returning home is to justify a particular set of values and a hierarchy of values: namely, the priority of marriage and reproduction. “As far as the survival of humanity is concerned, it still depends on the formation of families. In this sense, ‘the family is not an object of free choice, unless humanity takes its own extinction as a value goal.’”<sup>10</sup> This priority is not only discussed in terms of the necessity of human survival and continuation but is also celebrated as a superior and happier way of life. This reverence for the family—centered around marriage and childbearing—reveals a specific value hierarchy within family philosophy. The philosophy of returning home insists that this hierarchy is true, objective, universal, and necessary.

However, this implies denying or diminishing the value and meaning of the lives of individuals who do not choose this family-based value system. If a person does not accept or live according to this model of family life, then their life would be regarded as lacking moral value. Yet this conclusion does not accord with our basic understanding of a pluralistic modern society. We cannot claim that a person who chooses to live alone or not to have children thereby lives a life with no moral value or with less moral value, nor that such a life falls short of the ideal of a modern moral individual. Such a conclusion is absurd.

The absurdity of the claim that “the lives of those who do not marry or have children lack moral value or possess less moral value” is evident both at the normative and empirical levels. At the normative level, first, forming a family through marriage and childbearing is not a necessary condition for a life to have moral value. As mentioned earlier, the moral worth of figures such as Zhang Guimei and Mother Teresa lies in their pursuit of non-instrumental values. From a consequentialist perspective, the value of their lives may even be far greater than that of many ordinary people with families, and this is one of the many reasons they are so widely admired.

Second, there are many neutral good things in life, and forming a family through marriage and childbearing is just one among them. Neutral good

10 Sun Xiangchen 孫向晨, “Jia: hou de wenhua yu bao de zhexue—dui Li Yong jiaoshou yiwen de huiying” 家：厚的文化與薄的哲學—對李勇教授一文的回應, *Zhexue dongtai* 哲學動態, no. 6 (2022): 51.

things stand in contrast to neutral evils. Neutral goods are those that are open to everyone's choice—for example, academic research, scientific exploration, and medical practice. Neutral evils, by contrast, are those that should not be chosen by anyone, such as racism, sexism, or deriving pleasure from harming innocent people.

Although neutral goods are available to all, not everyone chooses them.<sup>11</sup> For instance, medical practice is undoubtedly noble, and saving lives is admirable in any era, yet not everyone wishes to become a doctor. Forcing someone who has no interest in medicine to become a physician would be absurd. Similarly, academic research has made immense contributions to humanity, but insisting that a student who dislikes research should pursue it as a career—even if they are capable of it—would be equally unreasonable. In the same way, not everyone is willing to pursue the family as a neutral good, even though it is available as an option for all. Forcing someone who does not desire marriage and family to marry and have children is just as absurd as forcing someone who dislikes medicine to become a doctor.

The absurdity of the claim is even more evident at the empirical level. Elite athletes often forgo romantic relationships and family life during their youth, devoting themselves entirely to the pursuit of their sport. Are such lives not worthy of admiration? Similarly, philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), David Hume (1711–1776), and René Descartes (1596–1650) did not have conventional family lives, yet this in no way diminishes the value of their lives.

## 5 The Limits of Family Philosophy

This discussion of family philosophy does not seek to deny the intrinsic value of the family or its particular significance in the contemporary era. In modern China, where Confucian traditions remain deeply rooted, core ideas concerning family, marriage, and reproduction continue to shape moral outlooks and everyday practices. However, changing attitudes among younger generations—especially the increasing choice not to marry or have children—combined with population ageing and declining birth rates, has generated widespread social concern.

Take elder care as an example: how large numbers of elderly individuals living alone are to maintain dignity in later life has become a pressing practical

11 Li Yong 李勇, *Pian'ai yu gongzheng: jiating guan'ai de daode bianhu* 偏愛與公正—家庭關愛的道德辯護 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2018), 250.

issue. At the same time, Confucian norms emphasizing filial support and direct familial care have led many elderly people to resist institutional care.

Many scholars of Chinese philosophy argue that we should draw on traditional thought—especially Confucianism—to respond to these social and ideological challenges. Such efforts necessarily require the modernization and reinterpretation of traditional ideas. Given that the historical context of these traditions has changed and that modernization presents new conditions, the questions of whether and how such transformations can effectively respond to contemporary challenges are of both theoretical and practical significance.

Against this backdrop, family philosophy appears to have two limits.

First, family philosophy should not overgeneralize the role of the family by treating marriage and childbearing as the optimal solution to both major social problems and the everyday difficulties of individual life. As argued above, ours is not an age defined by nihilism; and even if nihilism were a concern, family philosophy would not provide the best response. While marriage and childrearing may help many individuals find meaning in life, it cannot be assumed that this is the case for everyone. The boundary of family philosophy lies in recognising the limits of the family and acknowledging that marriage and reproduction should not be prescribed to everyone as a universal remedy.

Second, family philosophy must recognize which problems can be addressed within the family and which cannot. Care for the elderly, for instance, is no longer an issue that can be adequately managed within the family alone. In single-child families, middle-aged individuals are often expected to care for ageing parents—sometimes on both sides—which exceeds what they can reasonably bear. In such cases, support from broader social and state institutions becomes necessary. Similarly, issues such as rising divorce rates, single-parent households, and domestic violence cannot be resolved solely within the family. Family philosophy should not claim that the family is a universal remedy for all problems, nor that all familial issues can be solved internally.

## 6 Conclusion

According to the theory of returning home and family philosophy, the modern world, grounded in the notion of the individual as subject, is confronted with a condition of nihilism, and only by returning home, cultivating *qinqin*, and sustaining *shengsheng*, can we recover a meaningful and “warm” or humane world. This paper has argued, however, that the purported nihilistic condition

of modernity is in fact a pseudo-problem, and that concepts such as *qinqin*, *shengsheng*, and returning home do not provide reasonable solutions to the challenges faced by the modern world. At its core, the philosophy of returning home attempts to resolve the utilitarian, social, moral, political, and religious difficulties confronting modern individuals by constructing a kinship-based community grounded in blood ties and affective norms. Put more bluntly, it amounts to the claim that having a child will solve every problem.

*Translated by Caterina Weber*